Faith and Inspiration

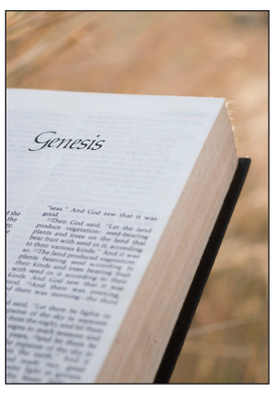
God of Everything (Including Viruses)

APOLLO: ... What else does mankind demand of its gods?

CAPTAIN KIRK: Mankind has no need for gods. We find the one quite adequate.

Scene from "Star Trek" original series episode "Who Mourns for Adonais?"

Vincent V. Marshburn



The belief model of ancient polytheism attributes the various forces of what we call nature and the conceptual ideas and principles of life (e.g., love, beauty, luck, war, fertility, honor) to individual deities or supernatural beings.

On the other hand, the Bible indicates that the one God(specifically named Yahweh or Jehovah) is the ultimate source of everything, so essentially, he is the God of "fill in the blank" (i.e., everything). Attempting to characterize and comprehend a comprehensive God can be rather tricky, even problematic. Perhaps this is part of the reason that ancient humanity found itself devolving into a more pluralistic theological sensibility following the Fall, after Adam and Eve decided to contrive their own concept of knowledge apart from God.

Yes, I know, many scholars insist that monotheism is a later development in human history, but taking the Genesis narrative into account, it would appear that the original sin of humankind involved a separation from a relationship with the one true God and led to an eventual descent into disparate theistic pursuits and queries, the practical outcome of which would seem to have been that humanity apparently developed a proclivity for identifying and manufacturing gods for everything.

Another seemingly natural tendency was to engage in persistent attempts to appease these presumed deities to gain favor and, somewhat ironically, attempt to exercise some degree of "control" over these mysterious forces that conceivably surround us.

Perhaps a reasonable question is that if the God of the Bible is indeed the all-in-one God, how does one reconcile some of the supposed paradoxes that confront us on a regular basis, such as the perceived state of the world in which we presently find ourselves – which, in perspective, is perhaps not any more chaotic and tumultuous than at any other time in human experience?

One of the more unfortunate and often distressing facts of life is that many factors of our environment, including infection and disease, can wreak havoc on society and civilization. As in times past, there are those who would attempt to associate occurrences such as viral outbreak with "God's wrath," citing instances of divine judgment throughout scripture.

In contrast, there are those who would conceptualize these critical and threatening events as somehow "proving" the non-existence of God – after all, a loving God wouldn't allow suffering, would he?

For either of these conjectures, the best response may be to consider that the point of the God of Everything is that he is, in fact, the God of everything – he is not just the God of one thing or another or powerless to affect one thing or another.

Inherent in the lessons of the Bible is the notion that God is perfect and in him all things are perfectly balanced and harmonized; furthermore, God's version of everything is in fact a perfect version.

So does this mean he is a God of Wrath and a God of Justice? Undoubtedly.

Is he also a God of Love and a God of Mercy? Most certainly.

It might seem natural to wonder how that is possible. An earnest pursuit of Biblical spiritual truth would reveal that the answer, ultimately, is in Jesus. How so, one may ask? Let us digress momentarily and then return to understand this conviction.

The Bible contains many verses that attest to God's authorship and ownership of all creation. For instance: "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him." Colossians 1:16 (NASB)

So if he is the God of Everything, that means he created everything, including the things which now appear to produce various kinds of suffering in life; that includes bacteria and viruses – and, well, human beings for that matter. If we assume that all of creation was created for a specific purpose and was in harmony before the Fall, it is probably not unreasonable to wonder what that purpose might be and what that harmony might look like – after all, God gave us a heart and mind with the urge to search out these truths. God, as the ultimate creative genius, apparently appreciated and enjoyed diversity among forms of life. Inasmuch as that is true, presumably God does what he does for a reason.

Although "his ways are not our ways" and the intricacies of life remain somewhat mysterious in the complexity of their design, it turns out that honest and open scientific inquiry can be quite helpful in our attempts to discover some inkling of these purposes. When considering microorganisms, while we might typically perceive bacteria and viruses to represent some of the more destructive or detrimental aspects of biological existence, the truth is that the majority of these are in fact quite helpful and important to sustaining the balance of organic operations.

For instance, current knowledge indicates that many types of bacteria are in fact beneficial – in many types of animals, including humans, they help contribute to proper digestion as well as a properly functioning immune system.

Furthermore, it may seem counterintuitive to common perception and sensibilities, but various kinds of viruses have also been found to contribute positively to the natural immune system.

Additionally, some scientists speculate that the highly mutative nature of viruses might be a factor in transferring certain genetic properties among populations of organisms to aid in adaptation to different environments.*

These kinds of insights may help to illustrate and support the notion that there is indeed a purpose for all things, and that the role of such microorganisms was originally not intended to be so pernicious as they might seem now. While these appear to be empirical and verifiable facts, it is also true that some of these "invisible" entities are responsible for some of the ongoing physical suffering in our world. In keeping with the foregoing analysis, if they were part of creation and were meant to benefit rather than harm life, we should be able to derive some understanding of what accounts for the current apparently adverse nature of some of these microorganisms.

It may be helpful to keep in mind that the God of Everything is the God of the "visible and invisible." Remember that creation began as a cosmos designed for order and unanimity. Lamentably, sin was the initial catalyst for disrupting this natural coherence and synergy. Considering that our reality comprises of both physical and spiritual dimensions, it should make sense that sin as a disruptive factor in that reality triggered both physical and spiritual consequences. These consequences include some of the suffering we regularly experience and observe, including, presumably, that caused by viruses. This is not to say that specific or individual physical conditions are always caused by specific or individual sins, although there may be some evidence to indicate that in some instances there can be some correlation and perhaps even causation.

One could argue, then, that the God of Everything is also the God of Suffering. That might seem unappealing or even unacceptable at first, but what if that "God of Suffering" was not necessarily the God who causes suffering, but actually the God Who Knows Suffering? What if he thoroughly understands suffering in all of its wretched and miserable reality. One could readily observe that God experienced the ultimate suffering in Jesus' crucifixion – not only the physical agony and torment he endured, but the burden of bearing and paying for the sin of the entire world. In this way, the God of Wrath and Justice is also the God of Love and Mercy. He abided it all and provided it all because of his desire to redeem all of creation. He is, indeed, the God of Everything.

Thus, God is in control, and in his sovereignty allows things to occur that, on the one hand, might seem tragic and calamitous, but on the other hand, He can use to provide opportunities for us to demonstrate the better part of ourselves, to reflect the image of God in which we have been made -- qualities such as cooperation, compassion, and innovation. Our prayer should be that God would grant us the wisdom to overcome our struggles and challenges, and in doing so, glorify him for all his goodness in the midst of our circumstances, which should be our ultimate aim.

**This page from the "Answers in Genesis" Web site provides an interesting analysis on the role of viruses: https://answersingenesis.org/*

To submit an obituary or death notice, email wording and jpg photo to info@newsleadermail.com. Print deadline is Wednesday at noon. 305-245-2311

Obituary

Ret. MSgt. Neil Vernon Watson Jr.

Neil Vernon Watson Jr. "Yankee", 76 of Monroe, Georgia, passed away on March 17th, 2020, after a long battle with Parkinson's disease and Dementia.

Neil is preceded in death by his parents Neil V. Watson Sr. and Ethel Watson, his wife Violeta Watson, sisters Ethel "Bubbles" Watson and Lois Mistalski, and granddaughter Amy Nicole Watson.

Neil was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 4th, 1943. He graduated from Collingswood High School, New Jersey. He then enlisted into the United States Air Force in 1962, serving honorably for 21 years, advancing to the rank of Master Sergent. His career took him around the world from the Pacific paradise of the Philippines, to the Rhinelands of Germany, to Turkey in the Far East. He served all over the United States from the mountains of Colorado, to the southern charms of Georgia, to the sunny shores of Homestead, FL. He served multiple tours in Vietnam, and had a highly successful career, culminating in being awarded the Meritorious Service Award for his many accomplishments.

Neil worked as a General Manager for Miami Dade County, FL at the Homestead General Aviation Airport and two others, managing the three flight lines for over 25 years. He was an avid Miami Dolphins fan and loved all sports, especially golf. He volunteered many hours to his church, Faith Baptist, Monroe until his health started to decline.

Neil is survived by his loving wife Virginia Dare Watson, his sisters Ralphene Deacon and Cheryl Boyle, his children Aveline Rogers (Dean), Neil Watson III (Andrea), Jesseca North (Matthew), Tommy Bowden (Janet), Kitty Yarbrough, Cynthia Johnson, Tracey Wheeler (Randall), Debbie Shaw (Mickey), numerous grandchildren and many great-grandchildren.

The burial will be held in Homestead, Florida at Palms Woodlawn Memorial Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to support research for a cure of Parkinson's or Dementia in Mr. Watson's memory . The family wishes to thank Abbey Hospice, Park Place Nursing Home, Meadows Funeral Home, and Pastor Chris Conner.

Jesse White

Jesse White passed peacefuly on 3/15/2020 at Tallahassee Memorial in Florida. He was born on 8/20/1935.

Jesse was an avid sportsman, and loved fishing and hunting.

He retired from Dade County with 30 years at an early age then opened his welding shop for several years before moving to Taylor County, Florida.

He was a master mason of Royal Palm Lodge and Past Master. A Master of Memorial Lodge, Shrine Club and Tin Lizzie Unit in Homestead. He enjoyed participating in many functions especially riding his Tin Lizzie in the Orange Bowl Parade as well as parades elsewhere. He was a member of Scottish Rite, Shriner and Royal Order of Jesters of Miami. He was a Kentucky Colonel as well.

He was preceded in death by his parents James and Alma White of Ind., Kentucky and son Robby White of Key Largo, Florida. He leaves behind his loving wife of 67 yeats, sons Stanley White, David White and Mark White, all of Taylor County, Florida. Three grandchildren and three great grandchildren, his siblings Jake White, Fred White, Robert White, and Bill White Sr., all of Kentucky. As well as a loving host of other relatives, nieces, nephews and friends.

A Masonic Funeral and Celebration of Life will be held at a later date and place.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to Shriners Hospital or the charity of your choice. Beggs Funeral Home in Perry Florida is assisting the family.

Avoiding Emotional Spending

StatePoint- Decisions about spending money are often driven by emotions, even if what your heart is telling you goes against logic. Emotional financial choices may provide you with short-term happiness, but they are just as likely to result in long-term regret or debt.

• Get an accurate picture of what it costs to maintain your lifestyle and fund your goals. Knowing your fixed and variable expenses and being able to quantify your goals in terms of dollars and timeframes will help you understand what you can afford to spend in the near term.

• Ask yourself if you want something or need something before you buy it. If you do need it, or if it will make a huge difference in your life and you can pay for it right away without touching funds that are earmarked for other important goals, then go for it.

• When making major purchases (for example, over $500), take some time between deciding to buy and making the actual purchase. Prioritize your expenditures by categorizing them in terms of cost and effect.

• Make a list before shopping. Whether shopping for groceries, household items or gifts, creating a list -- and sticking to it -- will help you avoid impulse buys and save money.

Calvary Baptist Church
34850 SW 213th Ave, Homestead
calvaryflorida.com
Sunday School - 10am
Sunday Morning - 11am
Wednesday - 7 pm
Saturday - Florida City Park
Prayer in the Park - 10am

Temple Hatikvah
Homestead Jewish Center
A Reform Congregation
183 NE 8th St., Homestead
For information please call
305-454-4944
or visit www.thhjc.org